

Consumer Swaps: Holiday Edition

As we enter December, there is one thing on everyone's mind—the holidays. No matter what you are celebrating this year, you might want to consider the following eco-friendly swaps when making your house festive and cementing holiday plans.

Ditch Unrecyclable Gift Wrap

Did you know that foiled, metallic, or glitter bespeckled gift wrap is not recyclable? Putting these in with your other recyclables may prevent your entire bin from being properly processed. Rather than buying environmentally detrimental gift wrap that is destined for the landfill, opting for brown craft paper provides the suspense of unwrapping the gift and the charm of a nostalgic, classic aesthetic. Reusing any strings or decorations around them can provide many years of beautiful, sustainable presents.

Upgrade Your Christmas Lights

If you still have incandescent lights tucked away for the holidays, now might be the perfect time to consider switching to LEDs. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, "if every household would switch over to LED string lights, we could save 5.97 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity, which is the equivalent of the annual electricity output of half a million homes." (Kocan) In addition, because they don't release as much heat, LEDs are far safer and last much longer.

If that doesn't convince you, the added strain of incandescent string lights to your wallet might. "It only costs \$0.27 to light a 6-foot tree for 12 hours a day for 40 days with LEDs compared to \$10 for incandescent lights." (energy.gov) Those savings are compounded if your house is the brightest on the block, and switching could save you hundreds of dollars over the years.

Give Green Gifts

It can be stressful mulling over the perfect gift or stocking stuffer for those on your list. The previous flyers from this year might provide some inspiration: from reusable water bottles and coffee mugs to shopping bags and eco-friendly toiletries, there are many presents that give the gift of a more sustainable lifestyle. Additionally, this can be a great opportunity to splurge on a higher-quality, sustainably-made garment that the recipient can use for years and years to come. And if no item seems to fit the bill, gifting an experience like a cooking class, event tickets, or spa gift certificate is a low to no waste way to give a gift they will love.

Works Consulted

Gifford, Dawn, and About The Author Dawn Gifford Dawn is the creator of Small Footprint Family. "12 Ways to Have an Eco Friendly Holiday." Small Footprint Family™, 30 Nov. 2022, <https://www.smallfootprintfamily.com/>.

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